

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY, Yerevan
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Title: Democracy Commission Small Grants Program Competition
Funding Opportunity Number: *DemCom-FY21-01*
Deadline for Applications: *April 15, 2021*
Assistance Listing Number: *19.900*
Total Amount Available: *Around \$400,000*

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy, Yerevan of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for Armenian based NGOs and Media organizations to submit applications to develop democracy, promote respect for human rights, and support civic education in Armenia. Please carefully follow all instructions below.

Program Objectives:

The United States Embassy is pleased to announce the first round of the 2021 Democracy Commission Small Grants Program competition. The program supports initiatives that develop democracy, promote respect for human rights, and support civic education in Armenia.

Special consideration will be given to proposals that focus on one or more of the following:

- Support transparency and accountability in governance and the fight against corruption;
- Develop independent, diverse, and pluralistic media in Armenia;
- Promote the importance of entrepreneurship and boost entrepreneurial skills; and
- Promote activities to engage youth audiences in the development of civic participation, political debate, and social responsibility in Armenia.

All projects should explain how the proposed activities impact Armenia's democratic development and further the long-term goals of the organization. Project proposals should describe specific objectives and expected outcomes. Proposals focused primarily on training or capacity building will not be considered unless the training will lead to concrete, measurable outcomes. Collaborative projects between partnering NGOs are strongly encouraged.

Participants and Audiences:

Please be specific when mentioning the target audience(s) of your proposed project, including demographic information and the approximate number of beneficiaries to be directly and indirectly impacted by project activities.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: *3 to 12 months*

Number of awards anticipated: *up to 20 awards, depending on budget request*

Award amounts: *awards may range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$50,000*

Total expected funding available: *\$400,000 (pending the availability of funds)*

Type of Funding: *FY20/21 Assistance Europe Eurasia Central Asia under the Foreign Assistance Act*

Anticipated project start date: *August 1, 2021*

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: The type of funding instrument, exact amount of funding, the scope of work, and the terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and U.S. Embassy representatives after the application has been selected for funding.

The funding instrument will be either a grant or a cooperative agreement. The award will be a cooperative agreement if the proposed project involves substantial U.S. Embassy involvement. “Substantial involvement” means that, after the award is approved for funding, the U.S. Embassy will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role. The U.S. Embassy will NOT assume direction, primary responsibility, or a dominant role in project activities. These reside with the recipient for the project as a whole.

Project Performance Period: Proposed projects should be completed within 12 months of the project start date. The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the project, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants:

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Armenian not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations;
- Independent media outlets registered in Armenia.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching:

Cost sharing is encouraged but not required. Matching is not required.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on: www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. All applications must be written in English using the application portal available at the following link: <https://www.usa.am/forms/site/view?id=ef790d3dda65ccddcef4fa7411b1ff50>

Only applications submitted before the deadline will be considered for funding. After submitting the application electronically, the portal will notify the applicants about their successful submission.

2. Content and Form of Application

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars

The following documents are **required**:

Mandatory application forms

- **SF-424** (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*) - please note that this form is incorporated in the application link
- **SF-424A** (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*) available to download at the application link
- **SF-424B** (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*) available to download at the application link

Proposal: The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. For the applicant's convenience the link to the platform provides subsections to fully submit the narrative of the proposal.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the project, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Project justification:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed.
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** The "goals" describe what the project is intended to achieve. The "objectives" refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Project Description:** Describe the project activities and how they will help achieve the objectives. A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the project activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the project. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this project?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.

- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time-frame of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the project be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?
- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant's plan for continuing the project beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

Budget Justification Narrative: After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate sheet of paper to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

Attachments:

- One-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the project;
- Letters of support from project partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner;
- If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file;
- Organization's registration documents;
- Official permission letters, if required for project activities;
- For the full application, the standard application package, consisting of the standard forms. i.e., SF-424, SF-424A, is available at: <http://www.grants.gov>

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registrations:

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at: 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

All organizations applying for grants must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- Unique entity identifier from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- NCAGE/CAGE code
- www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously).

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling: 1-866-705-5711 or visiting: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

Step 2: NCAGE application: Application page here:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call: 1-888-227-2423

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call: 1-269-961-7766

Email: NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 3: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto:

<https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

Registration is free. ALL three registrations must be completed before an applicant can submit an application. Since complete registration can take from three (3) days to four (4) weeks or longer to complete, begin the registration process early.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than April 12, 2021, 18:00 local [Armenia] time. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

5. Funding Restrictions

The funds requested under this program CANNOT fund: partisan political activity; humanitarian aid and charities or charitable activities; scientific research; fundraising campaigns; commercial projects; trade activities; conferences and individual trips abroad; projects aimed primarily at the institutional development of the organization. Please note that award funds cannot be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.

6. Other Submission Requirements

Applications and application materials must be submitted using the application portal set up for this round of competition. Please follow the link to fill in the applications:

<https://www.usa.am/forms/site/view?id=ef790d3dda65ccddcef4fa7411b1ff50>

Please visit the U.S. Embassy Yerevan website for more specific information about the grant

NOFO: <https://www.usa.am/cms/announcements.php>

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Evaluation Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the project's relevance to the Democracy Commission Small Grants Program goals; the extent to which the project has clearly formulated objectives, target groups, and expected outcomes; and the ability of the applying organization to carry out the project aims.

Quality and Feasibility of the Project Idea – (25) points: The project idea is well developed, with detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – (20) points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and the project approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget – (10) points: The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

Expected Results and Project's Sustainability – (20 points): Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure project success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The project includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – (15 points): The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

Sustainability – 10 points: Project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.

The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion includes factors reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets that criterion. Reviewers must provide comments to justify the scores they provide for each criterion. Applications that best address these criteria will be the most competitive.

2. Review and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

For any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity, if the Federal awarding agency anticipates that the total Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold on any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity may include, over the period of performance (see §200.88 Simplified Acquisition Threshold), this section must also inform applicants:

- i. That the Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);
- ii. That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;
- iii. That the Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.206 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Payment Method:

Payments will usually be made in two segments. An initial segment will be authorized to initiate the project. The applicant must provide an interim report about the use of the first segment of funds before the second segment is released. A small portion of the funds will be reimbursed once all Final reports/Documents are received and approved by the PAS.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to fully comply.

These include:

- [2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT](#)
- [2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION](#)
- [2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS](#)
- [2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE \(FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE\)](#)
- [2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY](#)
- [2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

- President's September 2, 2020 memorandum, entitled *Memorandum on Reviewing Funding to State and Local Government Recipients of Federal Funds that Are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities*;
- *Executive Order on Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence* (E.O. 13933); and
- [Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
 - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and

- Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

3. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. All recipients must submit a formal report to the Grants Officer upon completion of the project. The report should discuss what was done, whether the project was successful from the applicant's perspective and how it might be improved in the future. Copies of video materials, CDs and other video and audio aids generated during the implementation of the project attesting to the success of the grant activities are welcome, and sometimes required indeed. An accounting of the use of the grant funds must also be included. The information from this report will enable the Democracy Commission to better evaluate future proposals.

Recipients will be required to conduct a gender analysis with clear integration of the findings throughout the recipient's program design and implementation; and include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data in the applicants monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: sahakyanl@state.gov.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for SF forms

Here is guidance on completing some of the required Standard Federal Forms:

- Application for Federal Assistance, Standard Form SF-424.
 - Items 18a – g (Estimated Funding (\$)). These items must reflect (1) the total Federal funding requested for the project, (2) the total match, if match is a factor, for the project, and (3) the total project cost, which equals the total Federal funding requested for the project plus the total match, if there is match.
 - Item 21 (Authorized Representative). Signatures (electronic or ink) must match the name printed in the “Authorized Representative” section of the SF-424 Block 21.

Another Authorized Representative may not sign on behalf of the individual noted in Block 21.

- Budget Information, Non-construction Programs, Standard Form SF-424A.
Submit separate SF-424A budget forms for requested funding. In Section B, use separate columns to indicate how Federal funds, and matching funds, if match is a factor, are broken down by each cost category, i.e., by each line item.
- SF-424B, Assurances - Non-construction Programs.
This must be completed for each submitted non-construction application.

Guidelines for Project Narrative

It is critical that the project summary accurately describe the project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the project. Provide a summary of the proposed project (a paragraph maximum). Someone unfamiliar with your proposal should be able to read the project summary and understand your proposal.

Project Objectives: List primary objectives for the entire project period. Use plain language.

Detailed Project Narrative:

Detail what your project will achieve under the following headings: What, Why, Who, How, and When? Explain each aspect of your proposal clearly, and address each topic below. Reviewers must be able to connect proposed activities and project costs. The Detailed Project Narrative should track as tightly as possible the evaluation criteria listed under "Evaluation Criteria," in Section above.

Sustainability. Explain how the funding request will create a sustainable project after the grant funds end. List any other sources of funding that have been requested or will be sought for the project and the status of those requests.

Outcomes. Be sure your proposal describes expected outcomes, rather than outputs. For example, a successful project is not evaluated on the number of beneficiaries (i.e. how many people were trained), but rather on what the beneficiaries will do with the new knowledge gained to make an impact in their communities or society.

Organization and Personnel. Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Demonstrate the applicant's knowledge and experience in delivering the project defined in the application. Describe any partnerships with other organizations which are integral to the project.

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Detailed Budget Narrative: The Detailed Budget Narrative should explain the need for Federal financial assistance. Provide a detailed spreadsheet, with the narrative, separated into Federal and non-Federal shares (if there is a match), as they relate to specific, requested line items or activities (personnel and salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contracts, indirect costs). The Detailed Budget Narrative submitted with the application MUST match exactly the dollar amounts and line item/object classes on the required forms SF-424 and the SF-424A. Round off to the nearest dollar. Do not use cents! We recommend you prepare the Detailed Budget Narrative and spreadsheet first, then insert these numbers into the appropriate line items found on the SF-424A, and finally, complete items 18a-g on the SF-424.

If there are costs beyond your application's proposed Federal funds (and non-Federal share) needed to complete the project, list all other sources of funding that have been, or will be, sought for the project and the status of each request. If no other funding has been sought, explain.

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the project, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the project.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this project, for project staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the project involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the project, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the project), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the project. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the project activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the project, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All "Other" or "Miscellaneous" expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the project activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. "Cost Sharing" refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time and donated venues.

"Cost Sharing" refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.